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STAIR AND LANDING IN THE GRAND TRIANON, VERSAILLES.

ARTISTIC GAS FIXTURES.

A SURPRISING affluence of tasteful ingenuity characterizes constructive and ornamental design in chandeliers, lamps, brackets, newells and other gas fixtures. The new styles comprise, together with French and German Renaissance, Oriental types such as Persian and Arabic, together with bizarre compositions designed to accord with appropriate surroundings. Perforated and repoussé work and chasing exhibit in the best examples most creditable skill in manipulation. More varied and well studied effects are brought about from the combination of metals, aided by the different shades imparted to their surfaces.

Taking the productions of our leading art metal workers, it must be conceded that artistic design and execution have greatly advanced, designers manifestly working with the greater freedom, as the present rage for novelty and striking effects affords the widest possible range in the selection of ornamentation. Greater massiveness and simplicity of general form are prominent characteristics of present styles. Repoussé and stamped work are bolder. Polished brass, old gold, antique gold, oxidized silver, copper in gold tints, burnished brass, and even iron with deep lustrous finish are turned to account. Opaque enamels are resorted to for contrastive hues.

To come to chandeliers, we notice in the magnificent collection of Messrs. Mitchell, Vance & Co., some of whose artistic productions are illustrated on the opposite page, a dining-room chandelier of exceeding beauty. The corona on ground of burnished brass presents fruits in oxidized silver; the body of slide is ornamented with sheaves of corn; the band of dome has fish in bold relief struggling to escape from the meshes of a golden net; the rods in antique gold have links enriched with oxidized silver flowers. Other corona bands of brass have medallions of heads of animals in oxidized silver combined with perforated repoussé and chased work.

A massive chandelier, with gilded surface, has golden snake charmers mounted on the arms, these blowing oxidized silver trumpets to charm snakes, in the same metal, wreathed around the globe stems. A corona band we have inspected has three separate zones or belts of metal, the lower tier being electric blue steel, the center cast iron of a leaden luster, the upper bright brass, each band showing heraldic emblems in repoussé work, the whole surmounted with a cut cresting of old gold enameled.

In some of the best metal work of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, glass jewels of brilliant

hues were inserted, and this form of ornamentation is now repeated; even chain and link supports as well as centers and pendants of chandeliers are jeweled. Chandeliers of the time of Louis XIV. are well worthy of attention for massiveness combined with graceful outline and rich treatment of surfaces in relief.

Among the many varieties of attractive hanging lamps are some choice Oriental designs which simulate mosques with their open galleries and bulbous domes, the apertures filled with tinted glass; the silken cords supporting these are strung in Eastern fashion with glass balls. An Oriental lamp in old gold is in the form of a divided globe the hemispheres some distance apart, the lower showing fine flagree hand work, the upper in ribbed form with plain silver surface, the two connected by links and parti-colored glass balls.

Of quaint forms of lanterns is one of iron jeweled, representing a diving bell, another a bucket, a third a tambourine. Much taste is displayed in the tracery of segmental arched forms springing from the upper angles to meet in a ball of perforated net or chased solid center or floriated pinnacles. Some fine examples are in hammered metal, executed in bold style. Intertwined foliage makes a handsome base worked in different shades of metal or enameled.

Table lamps show great felicity of design. They are more than ordinarily massive, and surfaces exhibit chased design, geometrical combined with medallions, and presenting antique subjects.

Many of the brackets are after the ancient examples of oil lamps in the cylindrical, oval and pear-shaped bodies with arms gracefully curved, the designs, though simple, displaying a masterly skill in the management of metal. A number of wall brackets in choice antique style are imported.

Globes of chandeliers, brackets, and suspended lamps are set with cathedral glass leaded in minute pieces as centers or borders, the rest of the space being taken up with beveled glass, plain or jeweled. The glass is in irregular geometrical forms, reliance for effect being placed on a happy combination of hues. Jeweled glass was formerly limited to ecclesiastical use, but its introduction into dwellings has to be welcomed as introducing new elements of beauty.

The artistic effect of imposing gas fixtures is aided by the free use of metal in the same apartments in decorative forms. Mantel clocks, vases, antique candelabra, brass busts on supports, the latter of the same material or of carved wood gilded with plaques, sconces, jardinières and other fanciful ornaments maintain, so to speak, a sparkling companionship especially under the influence of artificial light. Accordingly the art metal manufacturers who have accomplished so much in supplying gas supports, have not overlooked these accessories of interior decoration, specialties that properly come within their sphere.

The chandelier shown on the opposite page is in the German Renaissance style, and is made in polished brass; the standard is of iron and copper, with top of colored glass and jewels, while the hall lamp is in hammered copper and polished brass.

PAINTINGS BY WATTS AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM.

THE exhibition of the paintings of George F. Watts, at the Metropolitan Art-Museum, brings to us that class of works with which we are least familiar. American picture buyers and American artists have hitherto been much more alive to the merits of the French school. It has been inevitable, and perhaps well, that the manner of doing should have engaged our attention rather than the thing done. The brilliance of the French technic, the opportunities for its study have been the supreme influences in American art.

Much as we owe and gladly acknowledge to French art, the exhibition of the Watts painting comes in time to counteract this glorification of technic. Whatever view may be taken of Mr. Watts' handicraft, it is impossible in looking over this half-hundred pictures that make up the collection not to realize that they are the work of a man who has something to say, and that painting is simply his medium of expression.

The collection divides into two parts, portraits and ideal works, and we may add to these one large landscape. A more interesting group of portraits has never been shown here. In the first place they are all of men whose names are household words, and each recalls to us a personality more or less well known.

These portraits are admirably hung in groups, each including men of widely diverse characters. We find in one, Mathew Arnold, the Duke of Argyll, John Lothrop Motley. In another are Tennyson, Browning, Earl of Lytton, Leslie Stephen,

the Earl of Shrewsbury. In the large gallery are, in one group, John Stuart Mill, Lord Lawrence, Burne Jones, Lord Sherbrooke. Near by hang Swinburne, Calderon, R. A., Cardinal Manning, Sir Frederick Leighton. Opposite these are Carlyle and the Marquis of Salisbury. William Morris appears on one side, and on the other is Joachim, the violinist. Several portraits of ladies, Mrs. Frederick Meyers, Lady Garvagh, Mrs. Manners, Miss Maynard; and Lady Lindsay playing the violin, completes the list.

The first impression of all these works is, I think, of their absolute truthfulness. This is the man. It is the triumph of these canvases that we are interested above all in the personalities. We are led away from this in no way by the artist's manner or method until after our interest in the individual is in a measure satisfied. In the authorized statement, concerning the portraits in the catalogue, we are told that the artist has worked as much from the mental vision created by the impression which the nature, career and character of his sitter have produced in his own mind, as from the physical aspect before him.

When we observe the portraits in detail it is interesting to notice the sympathy between the methods employed in the presentments, and in the character of the sitter. Each portrait is an illustration, and each group of portraits includes extremes that emphasize this fine discrimination between individual and materials and their uses. The portrait of Tennyson appears impalpably through the glazes that overlay the drawing beneath. The handling of Mr. Browning is robust, that of Lord Lytton has a dilettante daintiness. The traits of Leslie Stephen appear with careful distinctness, sharply modeled, wire drawn.

In that group which contains the portraits of Burne Jones, and of John Stuart Mill, we remark at once the calm manner and luminous qualities of the pigments in the face of the one, and the firm, decided, perspicuous modeling in the portrait of Mill. Carlyle and Swinburne are extremes brought into close juxtaposition. Carlyle—gloomy, rugged; his lineaments seem almost to be built up out of the paint. Mr. Swinburne, on the other hand, is handled delicately, almost nervously, reflecting in color and in the subtlety of the modeling his morbid sensibility. Between these is the sleek rotundity of the Marquis of Salisbury, and the exquisite and almost effeminate grace and color in the portrait of Sir Frederick Leighton.

The portraits of the women are not so interesting. They are, each, ladies evidently belonging to the esthetic coterie of London. Mrs. Frederick Myers holds against her crimson shawl a clumsy, dark green, gloved hand. The dress of each of the ladies claims attention by its strangeness. That we are so conscious of this argues that the painter was much less interested in their personalities. There is, however, much sweetness and grace in portraits, and even here he seems to be led into no consideration of textures.

The ideal works are of varied interest. Understanding, as we do, the sympathy between the artist's conception of his subject, and his means of expressing it, our interest in it is much more single than in the works of artists with whom form is first rather than second, and in whose works, if we do not care for the subject, we are at least interested in the technic. In the Watts paintings these are too wedded to be separated. We need here not only an intelligent appreciation of the subject, but a certain rapport with the artist to care even for the painter-work. There is by this reason a class of works in the collection to which the individual is in a measure indifferent. Such include the different apocalyptic visions, "Chaos," "The Curse of Cain."

The most perfect picture in every way is the "Diana and Endymion." The composition, the arrangement of the two figures suggest in charming fashion the crescent moon, and in color the silvery moonlight-tinted draperies of the Diana hover with delicate suggestiveness above the sleeping youth.

The arrangement of the lines in many of the works is significant and striking. In "Life and Love," the pendant to "Love and Death," and by no means so powerful a work, and not agreeable in color, the repetition of lines is very effective. The more remarkable example is a small upright study, "The Creation of Eve," in which a number of floating figures indicate a curved line.

While nobody would think of Mr. Watts as a technician, this mastery over his resources, shown in so many instances, is greater than his peculiar reputation as a painter led us to expect.

The last feeling after going through this collection, so unique, is of the elevation of the painter's thought and imagination, and it is his triumph that he has been able to communicate it to others. Samples of brilliant painting have not been rare among us, but of work such as the Watts paintings we have had but little.—M. G. H.